(d) An amount of Rs. 16.00 lakhs released to Government of Orissa during 2001-2002 has been revalidated for utilization during the current year, 2002-2003.

**Containing the coconut diseases in Kerala**

343. SHRI VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the production of coconut in Kerala has come down to 5.747 nuts per hectare due to a combination of pests and diseases;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken to contain these diseases;

(c) whether the Kerala Government have submitted a proposal for rejuvenation of coconut sector with an outlay of Rs. 576 crores; and

(d) if so, what steps have been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The productivity of coconut in Kerala has increased from 5,747 nuts per ha. in 1999-2000 to 5,870 nuts per ha. in 2000-2001.

(b) For management of root wilt disease in Kerala, the Coconut Development Board is implementing the programme on Integrated farming in coconut holdings for productivity improvement which includes cutting and removal of diseases palms, laying out demonstration plots; productivity improvement and organic manuring units. Coconut Development Board since its inception has sanctioned Rs. 110.94 crores to Government of Kerala for various programmes for increasing production and productivity of coconuts in the State. For control of coconut mite which was first reported in Ernakulam district in 1998, an assistance of Rs. 30.09 crores has been provided to the State exclusively for management of mite.

(c) and (d) Government of Kerala submitted a Project for "Enhancing Productivity of Coconut Holdings in Root Wilt Diseased Areas of Kerala" with an outlay of Rs. 576.14 crores for a period of 5 years which includes adoption of scientific crop management; removal of diseases trees in border districts ofThrissur andThiruvananthapuram; supply of seedlings for replanting and creation of awareness etc. The project stipulated Govt, of India's share of Rs. 181.70 crores.

The project has been examined in Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. The Coconut Development Board since its inception has sanctioned Rs. 110.94 crores for Kerala for similar programme. Such a massive programme which require high investment within a time frame cannot be tackled with meager financial allocation available with Ministry of Agriculture, Govt, of India. Govt, of Kerala, therefore, was advised to redesign the project for posing to Planning Commission or identified external funding agency, for which full fledged project would be required giving detailed justification for the strategies and components proposed to be implemented, the time frame, the milestones for each activity alongwith techno-economic viability etc.The State Government has been, accordingly, requested to revise the project.

**Drought assistance to Karnataka**

344. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA:

SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Karnataka is facing severe drought continuously for the last two years;

(b) if so, the details of Central assistance sought by the State Government to tackle the drought situation, the amount and foodgrains released in the year 2002 and 2003; and

(c) the details of steps taken to provide drinking water to the affected people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (c)The Government of Karnataka reported drought situation in parts of the State during 2001 and 2002 on account of rainfall deficit during South-West Monsoon. Central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for 2001 -02 amounting to Rs. 58.72 crore and for 2002-03 amounting to Rs. 61.66 crore were released to the State for undertaking immediate relief measures in the wake of natural calamities including drought. Details of assistance sought and provided from National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) for drought of 2001 -02 and 2002-03 is indicated below: